

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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THE LABOUR PARTY SCHEME OF STUDY AND EXAMINATION

By HAROLD CROFT.

The preparations for the above scheme are now so far advanced that it is expected that it will be possible to provide for the starting of the courses this spring. The National Executive Committee has recently endorsed a report on the matter and has authorised the National Agent to proceed with the administration of the scheme.

The Study Courses are intended :—

- (a) To give present agents the opportunity of revising their knowledge of election law and administration, and
- (b) to provide facilities for intending organisers to prepare and qualify themselves for constituency posts.

It has been noticeable for some time that the knowledge and calibre of many applicants for posts as agents have been of a very uncertain standard and it is expected that these prepared courses of instruction will ensure a higher level of individual competence being available for our Labour parties in the future.

These courses are not arranged on merely academic lines and no person with any native organising ability would suffer any disadvantage through the operation of the scheme, but would find the courses and examination an invaluable help

Working of the Scheme.

Each month the agent or student will receive a set of printed loose leaf notes. (These leaves will be punched and can be fastened into an appropriate binder.) The notes will be divided conveniently for weekly reading, and will be accompanied by a short list of questions some of which must be answered. In answering the questions the student will be quite free to consult his legal books or the notes. The idea is not to test his memory, but his awareness of law, and to ensure that he has read his notes and

has ability to look up legal books for guidance.

Marks will be awarded for the weekly answers and will count in the aggregate total for a certificate.

It will be realised that no agent need feel the slightest embarrassment over courses on these lines, neither with respect to ability or time or the matter. Every agent has conducted elections and is aware of the outlines of the law on them. The course will help him to codify his knowledge and fill in detail for practical use and reference in his work and, further, will ensure that he is up to date with regard to the later statutes and orders, etc.

The courses are designed to be thoroughly helpful to the busy agent; and with regard to the questions for answer, these will be straightforward and not at all of a tricky or conundrum nature.

The agent's point of view and requirements has been the touchstone in the preparation of the courses.

Subjects.

The courses will deal with :—

- (1) The law relating to the conduct of elections for Parliament, Municipal Boroughs, County Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Urban Districts, Rural Districts and Parish Councils.
- (2) The Representation of the People Acts, Franchises and Registration.
- (3) Organisation and Administration.
- (4) Party Constitution and Rules.

It can be claimed that the notes on these various sections will be an invaluable compilation for any agent. In the election series for instance the main notes are a compendium of the law for each particular election, with full references to statutes and orders.

Text-Books.

Though it would be possible for the student to work through the courses without law volumes, it will be urged

Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful!

that one or two books should be procured and arrangements will possibly be made for any such books to be obtained at a reduced cost from headquarters and also perhaps on an instalment plan. Agents or students possessing any decent law books would be able to use them in connection with the study courses.

Examination.

Arrangements will probably be made for the holding of examinations in the various Labour Party organising divisions.

Ordinarily, the examination may be by a written test and oral questions. In the written part, the entrant will be free to refer to any legal books and notes he may have brought with him. In effect the entrant will be requested to consider himself as an agent in his office, and that his replies are the answers he would send to correspondents who had asked for information on the various points.

In the oral part a few simply framed questions would be asked to test the entrant as to calibre and adaptability. The questions would be such as a responsible and discerning Labour Party might ask an applicant for a post with them.

The two principal examiners are Mr. G. R. Shepherd, the National Agent, and Mr. W. Barefoot, representing the National Association of Labour Agents. The Labour Party District Organiser would supervise the examination held in his area.

Duration of the Course.

It is thought that a period of one year will be necessary to allow for the interruptions which agents and Party workers experience through local elections, special campaigns and holidays, etc.

The study weeks might amount to about thirty-five, and this would allow for accommodations of a personal kind. At the same time this elasticity would enable such students as might enter on the courses at a later time in a given study year to complete their reading by the final date and in time for the examination.

Fees.

It is desired that a fee to cover both the courses and the examination shall be charged. Very probably it will be about 10s. 6d. This amount would, of course, include the sets of printed notes and postages from Head Office.

THE LATE MRS. HARRIET FAWCETT.

It is with deepest regret we have to place on record the death of Mrs. Harriet Fawcett, woman organiser for the North-Eastern area of the Labour Party, which took place early on the 2nd inst.

To Mr. Fawcett and relatives we desire to tender the sympathy of ourselves and of our readers, and in commiserating with them on their sad and unexpected loss we express the hope that the tribute we and others pay to our lost comrade may ease rather than accentuate the sorrow of those who were near and dear.

It was the lot of the Editor of this journal to work for over eight years as a close colleague of Mrs. Fawcett in the Midland Area, and that and a knowledge of her previous lifetime's work, all for and of the common good, inspired a lasting respect and keen appreciation of her earnestness and work.

Mrs. Fawcett never forgot that she was a working woman, and of the working people. That thought was irradicable in her and accounted greatly for her influence and the esteem in which she was held, especially by the women of the industrial areas.

At Brighton last October Mrs. Fawcett though by no means quite well, entered fully into the life of the Movement, both in its working hours, and in the off-time engagements which allow of gentle relaxations. We believe Mrs. Fawcett enjoyed her last stay among her colleagues, but none dreamed of the loss so soon to be sustained.

Mrs. Fawcett was buried at Houghton on the 4th inst., and a large and representative gathering attended.

URGENTLY WANTED FOR BINDING

*Copies of the L.O. for
February and November, 1929*

Address : The Editor

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THERE is now only a very short time before the new "Daily Herald" is published. We want to get orders in advance from every possible new reader. Labour Party Organisers by throwing their whole weight into this campaign and by enthusing every Helper can do much to organise the victory, and so secure for Labour a great national daily paper.

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The "L.O." Guide to Local Government Elections

PART II.—URBAN & DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

(Continued.)

Nominations.

Nomination papers in the case of both Urban and Rural District Council Elections are to be provided free of charge by the Returning Officer. Any other document in the prescribed form may be used. In rural districts, the Returning Officer must furnish the overseers of the parish with a supply of nomination papers for the convenience of local electors.

The time for the receipt of nomination papers was mentioned in our last article, and application should be made for papers immediately the notice of election (also mentioned in that article) is given. The address of the Returning Officer is to be found in the "notice of election," but the addresses of the overseers in rural districts will not be found therein.

Nomination papers are practically the same for both rural and district council elections, and the forms now used are those prescribed in the Local Elections (Alteration of Rules) Order, 1925. The forms differ from those used in Parliamentary and Municipal Elections by the fact that assentors are not required, the signatures of the proposer and seconder being sufficient. There is the further distinction that the qualification of the candidate must be specified.

Great care should be taken to ensure that the "place of abode" stated is actually the candidate's residence, and that the qualification relied upon conforms to the law. The official nomination paper contains a résumé of qualifications and an instruction as to how these should be specified in particular cases. The instructions mentioned are actually a part of the nomination paper, and no unofficial nomination paper should be used which does not contain

the instructions, otherwise the nomination would be bad.

An important provision relative to the signature of illiterate persons applies to District Council elections that is not found in the provisions for Parliamentary and Municipal elections. It is expressly laid down that it is sufficient for the signatory to affix his mark in place of any signature if the mark is witnessed by two Local Government electors.

There is no procedure at district council elections corresponding to the procedure with nomination papers at Parliamentary Elections, or with the hearing of objections at Municipal Elections. All nomination papers must be sent to the Returning Officer to reach him no later than twelve o'clock noon on the day specified, and thereafter the nomination papers are dealt with solely by that officer.

It is the latter's duty to number the nomination papers in the order received by him, this being important in case some elector has signed nomination papers in more than one ward, or otherwise more papers than he is entitled to sign, because in such instance it is the first paper signed by such elector and received by the Returning Officer which counts. There is no opportunity for a candidate to choose which nomination paper he "stands on," because the first valid paper received is the one deemed to be the nomination.

The Returning Officer has no right or duty to question the qualification of candidates, but it is his function to examine the papers and decide whether they are properly filled up. His decision in this matter is final if allowing the paper, but if he disallows a nomination he must state the grounds of his

Something is going to happen on March 17.

decision in writing, and the Courts may revise the same.

The Returning Officer must send a notice to each candidate stating whether he has allowed or disallowed the nomination. There is no provision for objections to nomination papers by any candidates. A candidate may withdraw his candidature by sending a notice in writing of such withdrawal to the Returning Officer not later than twelve o'clock noon on the fourth day after the last day for nominations.

The Poll

The hours during which a poll at district council elections may take place is dependent upon an order of the County Council who have power to prescribe the hours of poll so long as the poll "shall always be open between the hours of six and eight in the evening." This is not altogether satisfactory.

In the case of rural districts, occasions arise when elections for the rural district council and of the parish council may be taken together.

It is the business of the Returning Officer to determine the number and situation of the polling places and polling stations (the polling districts will already be fixed). Where there are more than five hundred electors in a polling district an additional polling station must be provided for each five hundred electors or part thereof. The County Council has power to direct the use of extra polling stations for a smaller number of electors. The prescribed notice of the polling having been given it is the business of the Returning Officer to appoint Presiding Officers and the necessary persons to assist them. Generally speaking, the procedure for taking the vote follows the procedure laid down by the Ballot Act for Parliamentary Elections, though the questions that may be put to electors differ and, of course, have application solely to the class of election under notice.

The procedure for the appointment of polling agents is unusual and necessarily has regard to the number of candidates who are sometimes nominated. The provisions are as follows:—

"If there are only two candidates, each of them may, in writing, appoint a polling agent for each polling station, who may be paid or unpaid. If there are more than two candidates, any number of them being not less than one-third of the whole number of candidates, may, in writ-

ing, appoint one polling agent for each polling station, who may be paid or unpaid. Any such appointment shall be delivered at the office of the Returning Officer not less than two clear days before the day of the poll. Except as aforesaid, no polling agent, whether paid or unpaid, shall be appointed for the purposes of the election."

The Count.

The procedure at the count follows the course ordinarily taken at a Parliamentary Election, except that an election agent as such, is not recognised.

Candidates as such, have no title to be present at the count, but each candidate may appoint an agent to attend at the counting of votes. A candidate may be present at the counting of the votes by taking the place of his counting agent, but it is expressly provided that in this case he must make a statutory declaration of secrecy. In this matter the candidate's position is exactly opposite to that in a Parliamentary election, where he may attend as a right and need not be "sworn in."

In some areas the procedure above mentioned is relaxed at the discretion of the Returning Officer to allow of either more agents being appointed and of the addition of the candidate.

Acceptance of Office.

Every person elected to a district council must take a declaration of acceptance of office within one month after notice of being elected or of "being deemed to be re-elected," and in these elections it is provided that the returning officer shall send copies of the notice of the declaration to the persons elected or deemed to be re-elected. Persons "deemed to be re-elected" are those who by a special regulation under this Act have fulfilled their term of office but owing to insufficient nominations are expected to continue in office.

The successful candidate who fails to take the declaration renders himself liable to a penalty which may not exceed fifty pounds, but which in the absence of any regulation by the district council fixing the amount of the fine is held to be the sum of twenty pounds. Some district councils have made regulations making the fine a merely nominal one, but regulations may stipulate the *maximum* sum, and, as stated, where there are no regulations, twenty pounds must be paid and the sum is recoverable summarily.

A person acting in office who has not taken the declaration is liable to a fine of twenty pounds for each offence.

Hints on the Contest.

No class of election in this country presents such a variety of circumstances as those for district councils. The kind of area to be covered may vary from a closely packed industrial district, through almost every range of distribution of population down to the most truly rural of scattered agricultural districts. It is almost impossible to lay down any general rules for the conduct of the campaign which would be applicable for all areas.

It may be assumed that in the main Labour will fight the more industrial and compact districts, and in many cases the course of the campaign will follow closely the lines adopted at a Municipal Election. That is to say, there will be public meetings, both indoor and outdoor, Committee Rooms and an election address, a canvass, and quite possibly a poll card, with all the paraphernalia on polling day of a keenly fought election.

We should hesitate to prescribe all these things as an essential to the contest in every urban and rural district because in these elections local popularity and personal contact count considerably. The ward areas, too, are sometimes so small that the expenses can be kept down to a most modest item; and the Committee Room may be a superfluity. But the principle must be kept in mind that every election is an opportunity for propaganda. The object is not solely to secure the election of the Party's nominee. If it were there are areas where the Labour vote is so solid that no sort of election work at all is really necessary to attain success. But there is far more ignorance concerning the power and functions of district councils than concerning the powers of Parliament itself. The comfort and health of the people are intimately wrapped up with the work of these bodies, and everything which stimulates public interest in their doings is an advantage to our Party. The working classes stand more to gain than anybody else by the proper functioning of district councils.

From these remarks it will be understood that we favour every possible attempt to concern the public in the work of the councils, and to this end we consider that literature and meet-

ings are necessary. The election address should be well thought out, inexpensive and yet nicely got up — if possible with the candidate's photo. The photo will count a good deal in these elections if the candidate is a well-known local figure, and a good distribution of the election address should precede the first meeting.

The election address may nearly always be a sort of omnibus production combining photo and address, notices of meetings and polling information. We have seen some excellent productions in certain districts, which while being pithy and the soul of brevity in almost every sentence have managed to include everything that an elector would want to know about the election, and how it concerned him.

In elections of this character the candidate should keep himself well in evidence locally. He is dependent on his neighbours and should personally canvass as many acquaintances as possible. At the public meetings speakers should strive to keep their remarks to the matters affected by the election in hand. Foreign policy may be by no means so important as the hygienic collection of the contents of the ashbins and other receptacles. And these are matters one cannot orate about. Hence the orator is at a discount, and the plain matter-of-fact man who knows his neighbourhood and his own mind can get up and make a short speech that will be well received. In the bigger districts of course larger problems evolve. But we are convinced that in the main our parties and our candidates have yet to develop the ability to make Local Government the living interest which it ought to be in the lives of the people. The outstanding feature in all Local Government Elections to-day is the apathy of the electors, and the solution to the problem lies solely in bringing the electors to realise the close touch these matters have with their every-day lives.

One final hint to candidates. A fierce light beats around the throne, and equally true is it that the man who aspires to local honours gets an extra share of the limelight. With being affected it is generally at least worth while remembering that oneself, one's family, one's home, actions and connections all come under special observation, and perhaps comment. A good impression is worth cultivating.

(To be continued.)

The new "Daily Herald" is YOUR paper.

THE GREAT CAMPAIGN

AN ARTICLE TO MAKE YOU THINK.

The great *Daily Herald* campaign proceeds apace. It is not too much to say that all the eyes of Fleet Street and the politicians of all parties are watching the great effort and making calculations on the results.

Will the Labour Government, on and after March 17th, have behind them a really front-rank newspaper with a worthy circulation, making their re-election practically a certainty? Or will—but the hopes of enemies are too ill to contemplate; that they will be falsified is already testified to by the forebodings of circulation managers in the big newspaper offices.

But our readers must realise this battle is big. The mobilisation of Labour is yet incomplete. At the General Election hundreds, nay thousands in some cases, worked in every constituency hand-in-hand for our common cause. These hundreds, these thousands, are imperatively necessary to-day. And the time is short. When these lines are read but a fortnight remains, or little more. In a fortnight we start and win a Parliamentary election. Are we all ready for the final Big Push?

In some areas the enrolment of helpers needs attention. There is no better way of completing the task than by calling *immediate* special meetings of ward and polling district workers and posting the enrolments *the same night*. Each secretary in the country has a responsibility to see that his organisation has met and made its plans.

Door to door canvassing is the keynote of the campaign, but there are lots of other ways of securing readers. Every public meeting ought to be combed. This is best done by effective stewarding following an appeal from the platform. A special speaker can make a more effective appeal than the chairman. If a meeting is not altogether too big to be unmanageable slips for promises to contain the names and addresses of new readers can be handed round *and collected*. Such promises should be visited immediately to procure the signed orders, while order books should also be ready at the doors. Some helpers will work the factory or mine, while others just touch acquaintances. One man we met recently had procured over 200 orders from casual contacts!

But the canvass is essentially the local Party's job. Meetings, and frequent meetings, of helpers are necessary during the campaign. Will those who read these lines please realise how important such provision for canvassing co-operation really is? "Just like an election" will mean nothing unless (as at an election) canvassing is done to plan and workers meet for consultation, encouragement and instructions.

Literature is essential in this work, but the aim should be to let each leaflet find a billet. Promiscuous distribution of leaflets either at meetings or from door to door is useless unless followed up immediately by a request to give an order.

It is quite a good plan to distribute literature one night and canvass the next, but too long an interval between the distribution and the canvass is unwise. The canvasser should always begin by mentioning that a leaflet concerning the *Daily Herald* was left the night before. If the householder says he has not received or seen it another should be handed to him and the points explained.

One of the leaflets available is an attractive explanation of the new Family Insurance Scheme. Another contains the message from the Prime Minister, while yet a third is an octavo throw-away which would well serve as an introduction for the canvasser to hand in on his or her visit. In addition there is a striking window card which every helper should put in his own window. It is helpful, too, to carry a supply on the canvass as many new readers will be glad to display same. No practised electioneer needs to be told of the value of a good window display. Workers who can display or post to advantage a double-crown poster may also secure supplies of an attractive poster for this purpose.

One need hardly add that every helper ought to be fully acquainted with the details of the new *Daily Herald* Scheme and the exact place in it of both himself and the new reader. Instructions should be very carefully read and the little weekly journal known as *The Helper* contains a mint of useful and encouraging matter.

Is your Party doing its share? Look into it!

Orders.	Immediately orders are received and authenticated by the "Daily Herald"	Immediately new reader qualifies for gift after trial period of ten weeks.	Bonus immediately new reader qualifies for gift after trial period of ten weeks.	Total payable to helper.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
6	0 1 6	0 3 0		0 4 6
10	0 2 6	0 5 0		0 7 6
20	0 5 0	0 10 0		0 15 0
50	0 12 6	1 5 0		1 17 6
100	1 5 0	2 10 0	0 12 6	4 7 6
250	3 2 6	6 5 0	2 1 8	11 9 2
500	6 5 0	12 10 0	5 4 2	23 19 2
1,000	12 10 0	25 0 0	12 10 0	50 0 0

It is somewhat surprising to discover that some helpers are not aware of all the cash coming to them and of certain fresh benefits conferred upon themselves. The original promise of ninepence for each tested order for the helper has been amended by a generous addition of bonuses. This is explained in the table above and the bonus should be a wonderful encouragement to helpers to make their totals qualify for the bigger payments.

In addition to the above each helper who has sent in a minimum of six approved orders becomes automatically insured under the Family Insurance Scheme which has been brought forward for the purpose of covering such helpers from the time their orders are accepted up to midnight of March 16th.

The helper who has secured fifty orders also becomes entitled to the free gift which may be either the Ensign Camera or the Writing Set. The helper who gets one hundred orders receives in addition to his bonus both gifts.

Finally, we want to emphasise what the whole campaign means financially to Local Parties. In the whole history of our Movement no such attractive offer has ever been made to Local Parties and no such opportunity has presented itself for securing money for propaganda and election work. There is hardly a constituency in the country where Labour's election machine is incapable of enrolling a thousand new readers, given an ordinary amount of energy and push. There are several hundred constituencies where two, or three thousand orders are possible, and five thousand or even more are actually expected in some places. What this circle of readers means to Labour's

prospects can be left to the intelligent imagination of every Labour person. But it means also grist to the mill and money in the pocket for the essential work of the Movement. Here is the table of benefits paid to Local and Divisional Parties.

Orders	Co-ordinating body.	Local organiza- tion, i.e., T.U. Branch or Labour Party.	Total payable to the Move- ment.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
6	0 1 6	0 1 6	0 3 0
10	0 2 6	0 2 6	0 5 0
20	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 10 0
50	0 12 6	0 12 6	1 5 0
100	1 5 0	1 5 0	2 10 0
250	3 2 6	3 2 6	6 5 0
500	6 5 0	6 5 0	12 10 0
1,000	12 10 0	12 10 0	25 0 0

And now we appeal to every reader of the "Labour Organiser" to leave no stone unturned during the next two or three weeks to make the Million Campaign a memorable event within the Movement and a red letter mark in Labour's progress in the constituencies.

*What you save in Cash
you lose in Efficiency
unless all the officers of
your Party get the
Labour Organiser.*

"Just like an election!" Is it so your way?

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GREG STREET, SOUTH REDDISH	-	STOCKPORT
WARRINGTON	- - -	LANCASHIRE
CRANBOURNE STREET	- - -	LEICESTER
PELAW - - - -	- - - -	COUNTY DURHAM

A PROGRAMME OF ELECTORAL REFORM

By THE EDITOR.

As our readers are aware, an enquiry into Electoral Reform was promised early in the life of the present Parliament. A Committee of Enquiry has now been formed and the Prime Minister recently announced the personnel of the Committee as follows:— Lord Arnold, Lord Bayford, Lord Craigmyle, Mr. W. M. Adamson, M.P., Capt. Bennett, M.P., Capt. Bourne, M.P., Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P., Mr. J. S. Clarke, M.P., Mr. G. Dallas, M.P., Mr. B. W. Gardner, M.P., Sir S. Hoare, M.P., Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P., Sir Donald MacLean, M.P., Sir H. O'Neill, M.P., Sir B. Peto, M.P., Dr. Marion Phillips, M.P., Sir H. Samuel, M.P., Sir A. Sinclair, M.P., Mr. Skelton, M.P., Mr. O. Stanley, M.P., and Mr. Westwood, M.P.

It has been stated that the Committee itself would determine the subjects to be considered by them in the light of suggestions made by the three political parties and this somewhat unusual proceeding leaves considerable doubt as to the matters that will ultimately be investigated by the Committee, and as to the scope of its work.

Hopes have been raised that the whole field covered by the comprehensive phrase "Electoral Reform" would be explored by this Committee, and that their investigations would be as exhaustive as the term itself is inclusive. We are afraid that doubts are now being justified as to how far the enquiries of the Committee will justify the expectations mentioned. In the hope that an opportunity would be afforded to advance the many anomalies relating to the Franchise and Electoral Laws, the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents recently caused some enquiries to be made, and the Editor of this journal has been principally associated with this work.

We feel that some light might now be given to our readers on the scope of these explorations, and we propose therefore to deal in these columns with the whole subject of Electoral Reform viewing the same in the main from the angle of the practitioner in the constituencies and of those who are called

into close relationship with the operation of the Electoral Laws in their ultimate application. It must be understood that the views expressed in this article are not given officially on behalf of the Agents Association, though they have been expressed by the Editor at meetings of agents throughout the country, and it may be claimed that in the main they receive the support of the overwhelming majority of Labour agents, although differences on some matters inevitably exist. We shall be happy to publish the condensed views of others where they clash with those to which the Editor gives expression.

If rumour speaks correctly, the Committee are at present engaged in investigating the more controversial changes which arise out of the subject. To these matters we propose, however, to give no more than a passing mention and our readers' attention will be concentrated on reforms of procedure which experience has shown to be urgently needed.

Constitutional Reforms.

That proportional representation has been considered by the Committee is an open secret. Our own attitude on this matter is altogether uncompromising. We do not believe either that proportional representation is an advance on the present system, or that it would provide us with a more workable legislative body. We are similarly sceptical of any advantage to be derived from either the second ballot or the alternative vote. In short, we consider that neither of these changes are likely to be an advantage to the State, or to make for better democratic government.

On the question of the referendum, which also may be considered by the Committee, the failure of this implement in its application to Municipal Boroughs is admitted on all hands. Town polls should be abolished as a useless and expensive anachronism. At the same time we are open to conviction, and rather inclined to favour, a constitutional change which might make certain classes of measures the subject of a referendum when introduced during the later life of a long Parliament.

Worker, what did you do in the last election?

Of other proposals which savour of constitutional change, we favour the entire abolition of separate university representation, and we desire also to see the abolition of double-membered constituencies.

The abolition of plural voting though long an aim and ideal of all true democrats is by the nature of things likely to be lifted into the sphere of high politics. The conflicting interests of political parties will ensure this, as also with some seemingly innocuous proposals. We are all for the abolition of plural voting and the taking of all classes of polls by the simply expedient of one person one vote. The arguments for this reform are somewhat time worn and overwhelmingly convincing in the case of Parliamentary Elections. It may be admitted that applied to Local Governing Bodies, the limitation of personal interest to one area implied by this change, carries us somewhat ahead of the times in which we live. At the same time we should like to see no weakening on this matter.

We may now perhaps devote ourselves to an elucidation of the points which are of special concern to our readers. Under the two heads of codification and assimilation, we may review a good deal of our existing electoral system. And it will be convenient to take these two questions first and afterwards treat of the many sundry reforms that are desirable under other heads.

Codification.

Codification of the laws relating to the franchise and the machinery of elections is long overdue, and the task is simplified by the fact that in 1918 no less than fifty Acts of Parliament dealing with these matters were reviewed and fifty-seven other Acts were amended or modified. Notwithstanding this recent revision the present system may still be said to have its roots in the Common Law of the Middle Ages, and the legislative ideas of the seventeenth century. These foundations have been built upon, and the structure amended again and again with always a piece of the older edifice remaining to confound and to tantalise the citizen who sought for a clear understanding of how the machinery for procuring constitutional government really worked. The last hundred years was punctuated with reform acts and notwithstanding a spate of legislation in the latter years of the century the process has gone on. Since 1918 there has been an Act of

Parliament, and sometimes two or three Acts, almost every year. Besides these Acts formidable Orders in Council, both numerous and conflicting have added to the general chaos.

The net result is shown in the fact that not a single text-book is on the market which is up to date in every respect. Few publishers care to run the risk of publishing books on electoral law because of the rapid changes which so soon make them out of date and unsaleable. So in the midst of chaos we get no guidance. Surely the simplification to be obtained by codification is not an unreasonable demand?

Assimilation.

In writing of assimilation in relation to franchises and the machinery of elections we open up a very wide subject. As far as possible we shall, when treating of any particular procedure, endeavour to indicate under that heading not only the direction in which uniformity is desirable, but such other reforms as seem required. Perhaps it will not be possible to carry this through with every item, and if there seems to be a repetition when dealing with miscellaneous matters later in these articles our plea must be that the intricacy of the subject makes a consecutive treatment somewhat difficult.

Franchise and Registration.

When such constitutional matters as the system of voting and the distribution of seats have been settled, the problems of the franchise and qualifications for office present themselves. The present three months' residence qualification for Parliamentary purposes is a fair and reasonable franchise given to all persons who have attained the age of twenty-one years.

The Local Government franchises still retain a bias derived from the possession of property or an economic status as a ratepayer. Differentiations of this kind are out of harmony with modern ideas, and a uniform franchise for Parliamentary and Local Government purposes is called for. This proposal would sweep away the many anomalies of registration and quibbles concerning qualification to be registered.

To-day, we have a yearly register where formerly registration was half-yearly. We see no insuperable difficulties to a continuous registration coupled with a yearly canvass and preparation of a revised register. The present system simply registers persons

who commenced to qualify on the 1st March or before, but it makes the qualifying period of the person who commences to qualify the next day four times as long. Safeguards could be found which should provide for persons registering through the registration officer at any time of the year, after completing the necessary qualifying period.

Qualification for Local Government Bodies.

The qualifications for membership of local governing bodies present many anomalies, while the disqualifications, which differ for each kind of local authority, present many absurdities. An assimilation is desirable which would give a uniform qualification for any kind of local authority. This qualification need be no other than either twelve months' residence or registration as an elector. This proposal sweeps away the qualifications based on rating, or on the possession of property. The latter qualification is one of an unexpectedly sweeping nature that was inserted in the 1918 R.P. Act.

The sort of thing which disqualifies from holding office ought surely to be uniform, and in making this so uniformity should be sought also regarding the procedure to be taken when a member of a local governing body becomes disqualified. The remedies to-day include variously: (1) Procedure by petition, (2) a motion in the High Court, (3) a resolution of the authority concerned or (4) a declaration of vacancy by two electors.

The Returning Officer.

There are striking and unnecessary distinctions regarding the authority and functions of the returning officer in different classes of elections. The acts of this officer are sometimes administrative and sometimes judicial, and in later legislation (or Orders in Council under same) the tendency has been to define the judicial functions.

The returning officer ought to be compelled to transact all his business within the Parliamentary constituency for which he acts either by himself or by his deputy. Power to decide on questions of qualification should be given, subject to appeals as mentioned later on. The needless differentiation in various elections which gives a returning officer a casting vote in some elections and virtually deprives him of

it in any other should give place to a common practice for all elections.

Nominations.

It is difficult to discover reasons for the widely differing procedure regarding nominations. In Parliamentary, County Councils and Municipal elections assentors to nominations are required, but they are not necessary in other Local Government elections. In Parliamentary elections a returning officer holds a sitting for the lodgment of nominations and hearing of objections. In Municipal and County Council elections the sitting is held for the purpose of hearing objections only, nominations having to be lodged at the clerk's office. In London boroughs and District Councils elections, nominations must be similarly lodged, but there is no procedure for hearing objections. In the latter type of elections the qualification of the candidate requires to be declared; in the other elections mentioned the nominators are under no obligation to disclose the qualification relied upon.

The needs of expediency and economy justify assimilation in these matters. Assentors are unnecessary. Qualification ought to be stated in all nominations and there ought to be a reasonable opportunity at all elections for interested persons to lodge well-grounded objections that would save themselves and the public any unnecessary expense of an election.

Election Procedure.

On the questions of the public notice of election, the fixation of nominations, and the day of the poll, and other times to be fixed by notices, there are several varieties of procedure. In Parliamentary elections the poll is a moveable feast fixed within limits by the returning officer, such limits varying as to whether the election is a Bye-election or a General Election or a postponed poll at a General Election, and complicated calculations have to be worked out in respect of most other kinds of elections, although the period when an election is officially taking place is approximately the same for all elections. Why, therefore, all this confusion and calculation? To make matters worse there is a difference in the way in which "time" represented by number of days is to be calculated.

There is in our opinion no satisfactory reason which fixes the election in Municipal Boroughs in November and

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other Local Government elections round about March or April, and assimilation of these dates would seem eminently desirable and all Local Government elections might well be timed to take place on the 1st May. We doubt, too, whether there is any real advantage in some local governing bodies having annual elections and others triennial elections, and while we are not convinced that uniformity in this matter is entirely desirable we opine that an enquiry into the experience of this differentiation is now needed.

Another point under this heading is the lack of uniformity regarding casual vacancies and the holding of elections therefor, when the unexpired term of office is short. On some bodies the election goes forward, on others the election may be held up. This question affects Parliament too because the matter has been seriously debated whether bye-elections should take place within a specified period of a coming dissolution.

Another important matter is the application of the Extension of Polling Hours Act to all classes of elections. Overwhelming evidence can be produced to prove that the same electors whom the Act commodores at a Parliamentary election require the same facilities at Local Government elections if they are to vote at all. The Act should apply to every kind of election.

Another Act possibly of less service which, however, should apply to all elections is the Public Meetings Act of 1908, the object of which is to prevent disorder. There is often more feeling and likelihood of ructions in a keenly fought local election than in a Parliamentary election.

The provisions relating to the use of elementary schools at Parliamentary

elections ought to be extended to Local Government elections, and under certain circumstances, at least, the Act should be extended to cover the use of secondary schools. It is hardly necessary to add that the present procedure is unsatisfactory and when next Parliament deals with this matter steps should be taken to remedy the weaknesses of the present regulations governing the use of schools.

(To be continued.)

ANOTHER HELPING OFFER.

We trust our readers before reading further will now turn to page two of our cover and consider seriously the value to their Parties of the exceptional service offered on that page.

Mr. T. Summerbell, whose name and services are well-known to an overwhelming majority of Labour election agents, might make claim to be the "old firm" so far as the supply of election requisites and organisation necessities are concerned, and we of our own experience and contact with local Parties know of the wonderful satisfaction always given.

In this issue Mr. Summerbell offers (1) to supply your election envelopes, etc., *now*, payment to be made after the election, or (2) to stock the envelopes till you require them, payment also to be made after the election. What earthly excuse is there to be unready?

Attention is also drawn to the stamps specially printed by Mr. Summerbell for use with the new Party contribution card. The stamp system surpasses all others for security, satisfaction and simplicity in book-keeping. They may be printed to your own design.

The Southampton Labour Party have just started publication of a monthly news-sheet entitled the "Southampton Labour News," which though priced at one penny is distributed free. Twenty thousand copies are printed and the paper is used as an aid in canvassing for membership. The paper is a crown folio single sheet—a somewhat unusual form. It has good propaganda value and its contents have special reference to the work of the Labour representatives in Parliament and on the Borough Council.

Enrol to-day, mobilise to-day. The sands are running out.



QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

Local Party Account Books.

Question. A long experience as an officer of the _____ Local Party and also of the _____ Divisional Party, has shown me that the way our accounts are kept stands in need of improvement. In a period of nine years we have had seven secretaries in the Party and about as many Treasurers, and the result is that each year the accounts seem to be a jumble, and it is quite impossible to compare one year with another. Though I have carefully scrutinised the balance sheet every year, I have not been quite sure and satisfied about them; not that I mean there has been anything short or any discrepancy, but proper books are not kept or it seems that each secretary keeps his own sort of books. Each newcomer seems to have a lot of clearing up to do with the late secretary, and it has sometimes been months before an up-to-date statement can be given. I wish you would give some hints on this matter in the "Labour Organiser," and if you could show how account books of a simple sort could be kept it would be very helpful.

Answer. We have, of course, dealt with account keeping at elections in previous issues of the "Labour Organiser," but our correspondent's suggestion is a good one. We are well aware that the account keeping of Local Parties leaves much to be desired, largely because of the inexperience of most officers in book-keeping and also because of the lack of any common system or standard set of books.

It was suggested some months ago by the Labour Party that sets of suitable account books should be prepared by them and stocked by the Literature Department, and this would lead to a much to be desired standardisation in this matter. At the same time, owing to the limited number of possible sales

and the high cost of making special account books, we doubt whether such a project would prove a business proposition to the Party, and we imagine there would be some loss on the sales.

However, the need for some improvement in local account keeping is recognised on all hands. We are afraid that we cannot give sufficient attention to the subject in this column, but we will do our best to give our readers a special article on this subject in our next or succeeding issue.

Books on Municipal Elections.

Question. I am trying to make myself master of the technicalities in Municipal Elections and other local elections and should be glad if you could tell me what books I ought to buy. Is there any book to be obtained from booksellers which would tell me all I ought to know about the law in these elections, because if so, I should be glad to buy unless the expense was prohibitive.

Answer. There is no single book which we can recommend as giving an adequate and reliable outline of the law on Municipal and Local Government Elections. "Rogers' On Municipal Elections" is a fifteen shilling volume published by Stevens and Sons, and this purports to deal with other Local Government elections. This is the only up-to-date volume covering the whole subject. But the book has some defects. Arnold's "Law of Municipal Corporations," though not up-to-date is an exhaustive treatise of great merit, and if our friend really desires to study thoroughly the subjects he has mentioned he should purchase this book also.

There is a volume by MacMoran and Dill, published by Shaw and Sons on Local Government Elections of almost equal merit to Arnold's. This is the

You read the Prime Minister's message?

"Local Government Act, 1894." This book is not up-to-date either, but it remains a standard, and the two latter books read in conjunction with "Rogers' on Elections" supplies everything that is necessary.

Registration Dates.

Question. I should be glad if you would publish in the "Labour Organiser" the correct information about the Registration dates this year. Some of our members have seen certain dates that are given in another Labour publication, and I am certain these dates are wrong. It has made it very confusing for me because in spite of what our folk say about the Capitalist press they have only to see something in print to believe it, and that is the trouble I have got down here.

Answer. We have seen the matter to which our correspondent refers and an unfortunate error has certainly crept into the publication indicated.

The Equal Franchise Act prescribed certain special dates for the preparation of the register in 1929, and it was enacted that the register then prepared should remain in force until the 15th day of October, 1930, except in the case of Northern Ireland, where the 1929 Register continues in force until the 15th day of December, 1930. The Act referred to did not, however, alter the normal registration dates which remain as fixed by the Economy Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1926. This Act abolished the previous custom of preparing two registers in each year and stipulated for a yearly register, which should come into force on the 15th October in every year.

For the convenience of our readers we give the dates laid down and which will, of course, be applicable to the current and each succeeding year.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

End of qualifying period ...	1st June.
Publication of electors lists	15th July.
Last day for notice of objections to electors lists	31st July.
Last day for claims	7th Aug.
Last day for claims as absent voters	18th Aug.
Last day for notification of desire by naval or military voter not to be placed on absent voters list	18th Aug.
Publication of list of objections to electors lists	13th Aug.
Publication of list of claimants	13th Aug.

Last day for objections to claimants	18th Aug.
Publication of lists of objections to claimants	18th Aug.

SCOTLAND.

Publication of electors lists	8th Aug.
Last day for notice of objections to electors lists	22nd Aug.
Last day for claims	22nd Aug.
Last day for claims as absent voters	1st Sept.
Last day for notification of desire by naval or military voter not to be placed on absent voters list	1st Sept.
Publication of list of objections to electors lists	29th Aug.
Publication of lists of claimants	29th Aug.
Last day for objections to claimants	3rd Sept.
Publication of list of objections to claimants	3rd Sept.

Local Party Rules.

Question. We are in a bit of trouble about the Party Rules for our district. Ours is a county constituency, and we have what we call a Local Labour Party established for our district, which is the area of a District Council.

Now our Party consists only of individual members, but according to the Rules sent to us by the Labour Party we ought to form a Party under Set "C," and I do not see how it is to be done. We have not got any Trades Union affiliations and there are no Trades Unions that we know of that have branches in our district. What are we to do about it? It seems a useless thing to adopt rules which we cannot work to, and which will only make all our work very confusing. Do the Rules mean that we shall have to carry on by calling our members together and appointing delegates and that these delegates will then be the basis of the Party? If so we shall only be able to select ourselves, and shall only be able to work if everyone of us is elected as a delegate. What on earth are we to do about it?

Answer. We think our friend has misconceived the position. It is not the purpose of the Party to force any inapplicable and unworkable set of Rules on any area and the various sets of Rules were drafted to meet normal conditions in differing types of constituencies, and they are adaptable with the consent of the National Executive of the Party to meet special circumstances.

Then what will your answer be?

Under normal circumstances, the area of an Urban District Council would have within its boundaries, branches of Trades Unions and other eligible bodies who could appoint delegates to sit along with the delegates of the individual members, and thus comprise a delegate Local Party as laid down in Rules Set C.

Our friend says there are no Trades Union Branches and no material where-with to set up the delegate body. Obviously then, Set "C" Rules are inapplicable for present working and the Party must seek sanction to continue functioning on a basis which is much more like the basis prescribed for polling district or Ward Committees. But our friend will recognise that the position of his area is probably only transitory. There are few Urban Areas where Trade Unionists are not to be found in considerable numbers, and the ultimate aim will be to secure the representation of these local Trades Unionists by the appointment of delegates from their number. This, by and by, will be done notwithstanding that the Trades Union Branches are apparently centred in some other area. This is the case to our own knowledge in the area our friend speaks for. The Trades Unionists do actually reside to the number of probably fifteen hundred in this area, but their contributions go to branches in the adjoining town. The object should be to work for the representation of these people in the Local Party, and when that is secured Set C Rules will be found suitable. In the meantime an exception can be made.

A MONEY-RAISING DEVICE FROM CREWE.

We have received from Mr. Frank Roberts, the Parliamentary Agent at Crewe, particulars of a little money-raising device which appears to be very profitable to the Crewe D.L.P.

Fifty thousand facsimile "tram tickets" are printed similar to the one reproduced below. These tickets are sold by collectors in the workshops, on the doorstep, or wherever Labour supporters are gathered together. The "fare" is one penny.

A distinctive coloured ticket is issued each month with corresponding changes in the serial number or index letter. At the end of each month all cash for tickets is collected by a

"Sales Organiser" and a ballot takes place from among the tickets that have been sold.

Regarding the finance of the scheme the tickets cost £4 10s. od. for fifty thousand, while an advert. on the back of the ticket brings in £3 as a set off. Ticket sellers are paid a commission of 15 per cent. and the Sales Organiser gets an over-riding commission of two and a half per cent.

We are informed that the prizes last month were:—First, £2 cash; second, £1 cash; third, 10s. cash, and there was a bounty of 10s. to the seller of the first prize.

On the first month the Divisional Labour Party made a net profit of £7 8s. 5d. This is after the Ward Committees and Local Parties have had an allowance for their own needs of 40 per cent. of the proceeds of the sales in their own areas. Even bigger returns are now being looked for.

We are informed that there is a copyright on the ticket, but Labour Parties desiring to copy the scheme will find the copyright waived in their favour on writing to the Labour Agent as above. We cannot vouch for the legality of the scheme, for in these matters widely differing views are taken in various areas.

G 34311

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Too late, too late will be the cry

THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

HELP AND HINTS IN SEASON.

The formation of Labour groups on Local Governing bodies is a matter to which little attention is paid publicly by the Movement, but the subject is one of increasing importance. In a number of towns Labour groups on Borough Councils have operated successfully for many years, and these local counterparts of the Parliamentary Labour Party have been of untold service both in increasing the efficiency of Labour forces and the efficiency by which the public has been served.

It is an amazing thing that there should be places where Labour representatives sit in numbers upon public bodies and are yet unorganised as a consultative and fighting force themselves. Yet we fear that this is still the position in some places and as a consequence elected Labour persons frequently cancel themselves out in moving or supporting resolutions or matters on which no consultation has taken place.

It is also surprising to find that opposition to the formation of Labour groups has sometimes come from the representatives themselves. An examination of these cases shows that almost invariably there are two impulses behind this attitude. We are afraid some of the opposition is due to the fact that certain pioneer Labour representatives have been too weak to maintain a consistent attitude of independence, with the result that entangling conversations and consultations have always taken place with the opponents of Labour and the allegiance of some Labour representatives has become of doubtful quality.

Another ground of opposition appears to have its origin in an assumption that the formation of a group implies an irksome rigidity and possible responsibility to an outside body ill-acquainted with the actual problems as they present themselves to elected representatives.

The problem of the isolated Labour representatives has always been a difficult one. It is hard to do anything effective without co-operation and consultation in committees, and it is not surprising that absorption in public work and constant association with the

representatives of other Parties sometimes weakens the hold which Labour should maintain on its elected persons. The fault for this state of affairs by no means lies solely with the representatives, and the remedy is often to be found not by merely deriding the backslider but by sending others to support him.

In any case whenever a few persons get elected the fact that some old representative objects to the formation of a group should not stand in the way of the group being set up, and he should be invited to join it. If he does not and time shows that he constantly ignores its decisions it will then be for the Local Party to call him to account.

The fear that the formation of a Party group may result in a subjection to discipline of an irksome character, is very real with some representatives. It has, however, not been either the policy or the practice, in the Labour Movement, to treat its representatives purely as delegates responsible for every action to the Party which promoted their candidatures. But it is the expectation of the Movement that Labour representatives will guide their actions and votes according to the well-established principles which guide our Party nationally and locally. And it is impossible to do this acting individually.

The creation of a link between the Labour group and the Local Party is essential to the carrying out any well thought out local policy or to the consistent application and advocacy of Labour principles in relation to Local Government proposals. We have discovered no better means to this end than that the Local Party Secretary should be the convener of the Labour group. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast regulations applicable to the circumstances of every area. Where public representation is good it is desirable that other officers beside the local secretary should attend the group meetings, and it is sometimes helpful that candidates should do so as well. Obviously, where representation is weak the attendance of too many persons who are not public representatives would be harmful. If any general

Of the lazy man who lets his chance go by.

principle at all can be laid down on this matter it is that whatever the amount of representation the Local Party gets at the meetings of the group, the predominant voice and vote ought to be with the members of the group themselves.

The question of interchange of opinions between the Party and its representatives, and of reports from the latter to Party meetings is worthy of careful attention according to the circumstances of each area. Reports there should be and the opportunity for intelligent criticism might well be combined with some attempt on the part of elected persons to explain at length the points of view that present themselves to them arising out of their experience in office. This is now admirably done for instance at Southampton. Here, in order to bring about a closer relationship between the Party and the Labour group, a list of subjects has been prepared, on which members of the group address meetings of the Party from time to time. The subjects are centred round the following heads:— Education, town development, public assistance committee, electricity, trams and buses, town hall, town planning, health, housing, water and works, etc. This list has been prepared in consultation with the leader of the group on the council, and one councillor is selected to open the subject, others being in attendance to support. We gather that it is intended that the speeches should not deal solely with current matters, but should be made as interesting as possible and cover the whole scope of the question, not only of what has been done, but what should be done with the powers possessed by the Authority, if Labour had a majority on the Council.

In the county areas the attention of the Movement is now centred on the coming Rural and Urban Council elections. We are hoping for another marked advance in Labour representation this year, and this may pave the way for a general attack on the County Councils in 1931. The added powers of County Councils as the result of the Local Government Act of last year has made it imperative that Labour should now seek to capture as many of these bodies as possible and leave a substantial impress on the remainder. And this can be done. In the past Labour

has put less effort into County Council elections than into any other sort of election, the result being that these bodies are saturated with inefficient, biased and feeble fogies who would not stand a chance before any intelligent electorate. And we do not believe that the electorate of County Councils is any less willing to receive our message than that in the cities!

Preparation, well in time, is necessary. Already in several counties conferences of Divisional Parties have been held to consider the question. In two or three counties, where no previous concerted attack has been made, committees have been set up to confer with Divisional Labour Parties and Local Parties on plans and candidatures. Policy committees have also been formed to confer with present County Councillors and others with a view to shaping a suitable and common policy. The question of ways and means, too, will only be solved by early and earnest consultations and efforts. With the abolition of Boards of Guardians and their powers now transferred to County Councils it would savour of betrayal if Labour did not seek in all areas to invade this last ditch of Tory reactionaries and enemies of the poor. We believe that Durham and Monmouth might have many imitators — if only secretaries will get the matter considered in time.

SCHOOL BOOK HISTORY.

A biting attack on School History Books is made in the current issue of "Plebs," the organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges, by Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., Under Secretary for Scotland. "The country schoolmaster," says Mr. Johnston, "who fabricates for a publisher the boiled-down romantic nonsense that he is pleased to term a school history book, would as soon think of interpolating a truthful account of the Highland clearances, or of the early factory hells or of the Lanarkshire industrial massacres and robberies, as his publisher would of paying for it, or any self-regarding Education Executive Officer of scattering it in his schools."

The "Plebs" may be had for 5d. post free (or 5/- per year) from the N.C.L.C. Publishing Society, Ltd., 15, South Hill Park Gardens, Hampstead, London, N.W.3.

The "Herald" has money to burn—but only to pay for new readers.

CHAIRMANSHIP AT ELECTION MEETINGS.

By MR. C. L. GIBBONS, *Edinburgh*
(Continued.)

In the second place do your best to assist a novice who may not be able to fill up the time if he is the only speaker or until the chief speaker or candidate arrives; or at an outdoor meeting it may be necessary for the Chairman to keep on talking until an audience has gathered. But even in such cases the rule that the Chairman should not encroach upon the speaker's subject should not be broken. How then is the time to be filled up? By talking in a general way about the history and principles of your Party or/and in a detailed way on any aspect of its policy about which the speaker is not going to speak.

Some ways are advisable as to the manner in which the chairman should conduct himself at a meeting, for the manner is as important as the matter. A chairman should bear in mind that, as such, he to the audience personifies the Party responsible for the meeting. The impression of the Party they will carry away will to a large extent depend upon the impression they receive from him, so without being pompous the chairman should act in a firm and dignified manner. Both his speech and actions should combine to produce in the minds of the audience a feeling of respect for his Party. It must also be noted that almost every meeting contains persons, who, if they think they can do so with impunity, will create disorder. They will certainly attempt this if they believe they have a weak chairman to deal with. But such disorderly elements will be restrained if the chairman's speech and actions convey an impression of firmness and dignity.

The following hints will ensure the maximum results in an indoor meeting.

When entering the meeting do so after the audience has arrived. The platform party should enter, preceded by the chairman, who should be followed by the speakers and any other platform supporters. When rising to address the meeting the chairman should see that he has plenty of room to stand comfortably between his seat and the table and when on his feet the chairman should stand up boldly neither leaning on the table or trifling with the articles upon it!

After rising the chairman should pause for a few seconds to enable the audience to realise that the proceedings have commenced. Then he should say "Ladies and Gentlemen" or "Comrades and Friends"—pause for another space and then commence his "opening remarks." The chairman should speak slowly, firmly, clearly and sufficiently loud to be heard by the back row or farthest point in the hall. The best way to ensure the requisite tone is to look at the last row of people in the meeting. The voice will then unconsciously accommodate itself to the eyes. A chairman should not get warmed up or attempt to perorate. If he does he will almost certainly break the golden rule already referred to.

When he sits down and while the speaker is addressing the meeting, the chairman should behave in a quiet and dignified manner. Many chairmen distract the attention both of the speaker and the audience by fiddling with articles on the table or fidgeting in their seat.

A word may be said as to the best ways of ensuring the success of an outside meeting from the chairman's point of view.

In the first place don't put your platform too near the roar of the traffic, or you will ruin your own and the speaker's voice. Secondly, have a large printed or written placard placed immediately in front of the platform stating auspices of meeting and speakers and subjects. It is advisable to ensure a nucleus of an audience by arranging for a few active supporters to be present at the beginning. These should form a ring not too near the platform and they should gradually close in as the crowd increases. Use all legitimate methods of attracting a crowd—music, vocal or instrumental; poster displays are very effective. Another occasional device by which to gather a crowd is the old-time one of arranging beforehand for one or two of your own supporters to interrupt the chairman.

It should also be impressed upon these supporters that they should not leave your meeting to go to that of an opponent no matter what goes on there. On no account should a supporter of the Labour Party be allowed to offer opposition at a meeting near to a Labour Party meeting, as this is bound to cause a shift of your audience to the other meeting.

INTERVAL AND CLOSING DUTIES.

Now let us consider the nature of the chairman's interval duties. These commence as soon as the speaker has finished his address. He must now make his interval remarks which include:—

1. An appeal for a collection.
2. An appeal for workers.
3. Announcements as to forthcoming events.
4. Recommending literature.
(To be concluded.)

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Publicity Pays.

*From the Labour Party League
of Youth Monthly Bulletin.*

I need hardly enlarge on the value of publicity to every section of local Labour Parties; the need of it is only too well realised by those whose funds will not permit them to compete with other political bodies in the field of advertisements and other publicity efforts. And yet there is a most valuable medium of free advertisement which many Labour Parties and almost all Leagues of Youth appear to neglect or else to lack the enterprise to explore thoroughly. I mean the editorial columns of the local press which in the majority of districts are read by at least 10,000 people a week.

People read the editorial matter with far more interest than they read the advertisements in a newspaper and all that is needed to put one's League of Youth before the public eye is a little knowledge of what local paper editors want. They want news; and news is the doings of local personalities or local organisations. Therefore the first thing to do is to organise an efficient news service in the League whose job is to chronicle every activity of its members. Let all the local papers have reports of all your meetings; of all dances, whist drives and social functions; of any political triumph such as the election of any member to a national or county Labour body; of any marriage, death or other personal item occurring to any member; of your programme for the winter and summer seasons and of any special effort such as a Socialist week or debate you may be having.

The question now arises of how to prepare the reports. If you have a willing newspaper journalist in your League get him to do it. If not here are a few points to bear in mind. Keep your report down to the bare facts. Give all these. If you are covering a meeting or function give the names of all the prominent people in the movement and the leaders such as the chairman and so forth who are present. Ask all speakers to give you a summary of what they are going to say, if you can't take a shorthand note. Never make the report of a meeting more than 600 words long. *Do not try to turn out a literary effort.* That is the sub-editor's job. Treat all local papers alike in letting them have information or inviting them to meetings and other functions. When reporters are sent to any of your functions look after them. However great your contempt for capitalist journalism may be, don't show it to the local press. And get the name of your League mentioned on every possible occasion. Remember what Barnum said: "I don't care what you say about me as long as you mention my name." P.B.

WANTED, TRAVELLING SALESMEN. No canvassing, no samples, useful side line for organisers, lecturers calling Labour clubs, I.L.P. branches. — Apply, by letter, stating district covered.—Walker, 23, Charles Street, Newport, Mon.